



Department of Justice

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EXETER MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO RECEIVING IMAGES DEPICTING THE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF MINORS

FRESNO—Acting United States Attorney Lawrence G. Brown announced today that ROBERT THOMPSON, 40, of Exeter, California, pleaded guilty today. The guilty plea was entered before United States District Judge Oliver W. Wanger to receiving visual depictions of the sexual exploitation of minors.

This case is the product of an extensive investigation by the Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The investigation in this case was undertaken as part of Project Safe Childhood (PSC). PSC is a United States Department of Justice initiative established to increase federal prosecutions of violent sexual predators of children, and to reduce the number of Internet crimes against children including child pornography trafficking. As a part of PSC, the United States Attorney's Office has teamed with state and local agencies and organizations to increase law enforcement presence on the Internet, and to educate the public about safe Internet use, thereby reducing the risk that children might fall prey to online sexual predators. For additional information on the PSC initiative, please go to www.projectsafekidhood.gov or call the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of California and ask to speak with the PSC coordinator.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Sheila K. Oberto who is prosecuting the case, THOMPSON admitted, as part of his plea agreement, that on or about November 28, 2007,

in Tulare County, he used a computer and modem to receive, via the internet, visual depictions of the sexual exploitation of minors. He further admitted that the receipt involved material depicting prepubescent minors as well as images of minors engaged in sadistic or masochistic conduct or other violence. The offense involved more than 600 images.

The defendant is scheduled to be sentenced by Honorable Oliver W. Wanger on June 1, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. The maximum statutory penalty for a violation of receipt or distribution of child pornography is 20 years in custody, a fine of up to \$250,000 and a lifetime of supervised release. However, the actual sentence will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables, and any applicable statutory sentencing factors.

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